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## JOHN PFEFFERKORN AND THE BATTLE OF THE BOOKS.

THE 28th of September, 1509 was a day of consternation to the Jews of Frankfort-on-the-Main. They had probably risen on that morning with the expectation of spending a few days in rest and rejoicing, for it was the eve of the feast of Tabernacles. It was a busy day alike for Jews and Jewesses, for it was a Friday, and preparations had to be made both for the Sabbath and the festival. The men and boys were busily engaged in the fitting up and the decoration of the tabernacles, in the binding up of the *lulab* (palm-branch), and the selecting of the best *ethrog* (citron). The women had their domestic duties to attend to, to prepare the food, to arrange their trinkets and their finery, to see whether the holiday attire of their husbands, sons, and brothers was in good repair, whether here and there a stitch was not wanted, whether the yellow badge which every Jew was compelled to wear was properly fastened. The holiday feeling was all the keener for the oppression under which they were always bent; for they knew no tranquillity at home or abroad. They were assailed in the streets by insulting language, they were pelted and assaulted, not only by the young, but also by grown up people. They were confined to a narrow, dark street, which from their sufferings they used to call New Egypt. On the inner wall of the gate of the bridge leading into the town, there was a picture in derision of the Jews, which roused against the inhabitants of the Ghetto the hatred and contempt of all passers by. Their right of domicile had to be renewed at short intervals, every three years, or even annually. This proved so profitable a business to the town, that the conditions were constantly modified, and it

was altogether a fertile source of oppression, extortion, and degrading restrictions. Thus, for example, in the year 1433 the Jews of Frankfort were forbidden to buy beef except in the four weeks between the 28th of October and the 25th of November. The rest, the enjoyment, the consolation afforded them by their religious holidays, must under such circumstances, have been all the more intensely felt, must have all the more keenly affected the inner recesses of their hearts, and have given them the courage again to encounter the innumerable slights and wrongs that met them in their daily life. They must have rejoiced, therefore, on this particular Friday at the prospect of a comparatively happy and quiet holiday; but they had counted without Johann Pfefferkorn.

On the day of which we speak, there appeared in their synagogue three priests, two town councillors, and Johann Pfefferkorn. The latter produced a mandate of the Emperor Maximilian, to the effect that the Jews should deliver to him, Pfefferkorn, all books which contained anything against the Christian faith or against the Pentateuch and the Prophets. By force of this mandate, Pfefferkorn was to be the sole judge of what was to be considered pernicious or otherwise, and his authority in this respect was to extend throughout the German Empire. He entered the synagogue, and in spite of the protests of the Jews, he took away indiscriminately as many books as he could lay hands on, and forbade the Jews, in the name of the Emperor, to pray in their synagogue. The day was too short to search the private houses for books, and he appointed the following day for this purpose. But the protestations of the Jews were so vigorous, that the priests who accompanied Pfefferkorn refused to disturb them on their Sabbath, and the second day of the festival being a Sunday, the confiscation was adjourned till the following Monday. The books already taken were meanwhile deposited with the town council.

The Jews were not slow in comprehending the impor-

tance of the measure. Not only the slight put upon them, not only the monetary value of the books, which was considerable, not only the attachment they felt for the religious works, on which hands were thus ruthlessly laid—it was not this alone that stirred the Jews of Frankfort to activity, but it was the danger to life and limb, which, as they justly feared would follow this outrage. But who was this Pfefferkorn? We have just seen that he was the bearer of a mandate of the Emperor Maximilian, that he was the Emperor's representative in the battle of the books, that he was to be the sole arbiter of what constituted blasphemy against the Christian religion, and the judge of what conflicted with the religion of the Jews themselves. For although the mandate ordered the presence of priests and magistrates at every search, this was a mere matter of form, Pfefferkorn being the man commissioned to summon them to these duties, and all this, as the Imperial decree expressed it, because of his learning and knowledge of the Jewish faith.

Johann Pfefferkorn's name had once been Joseph. At that time he was a Jew, by trade a butcher. When in that station of life he was once caught in the act of committing a burglary. He was put in prison, and would most certainly have been executed had not his friends ransomed him. Afterwards he was baptised, assumed the name of Johann, and like many another convert, did all he could to inflict injury on his previous co-religionists. For this purpose he wrote several pamphlets, and by his attacks on the great German Humanist, Johann Reuchlin, he raised a storm which vibrated all over Europe, and reached wherever people interested themselves in the learning and religion of the time. Pfefferkorn was probably nothing more than a willing and energetic accessory in a conspiracy of the Dominicans of Cologne against Jewish wealth. As such he was regarded by his contemporaries and by most of the authors who subsequently treated the subject. As the most conspicuous among the

Dominican enemies of the Jews at Cologne, I mention Ortvinus Gratius, the Grand Inquisitor Jacob von Hochstraten, and Arnold von Tungeren. The baptised Jew and priest, Victor von Carben, seems to have played only a secondary part in the affair. But Pfefferkorn has not escaped the fate of those who have made themselves infamous in history, the fate of being subjected to a thorough process of whitewashing. Ludwig Geiger, in his life of Reuchlin and in pamphlets scattered in various magazines, was at particular pains to remove any stains that might undeservedly stick to the reputation of Pfefferkorn. L. Geiger denies that Pfefferkorn had been either a butcher or a burglar, or that his conversion and his subsequent persecutions of the Jews were prompted by mercenary motives. He maintains that Pfefferkorn was not a tool in the hands of the Dominicans, but that the action of the latter was the consequence of Pfefferkorn's representations. He is of opinion that Pfefferkorn, a man of violent fanaticism, attempted to convert the Jews to Christianity by writings and persuasion, and that he became violent, abusive, and outrageous after he had been irritated by opposition.

These opposing views of Pfefferkorn's character will be considered in the course of this narrative. The first shot that was launched at the Jews under the name of Pfefferkorn, was a book of which two German editions entitled *Joedenspiegel* and a Latin edition called *Speculum Exhortationis* appeared in the year 1507. Pfefferkorn's avowed purpose in this, as in all his other writings, was to convert the Jews to Christianity. He tries to show in the *Joedenspiegel* how unreasonable it was of the Jews to decline to adopt the doctrines of Christianity, to go on expecting the Messiah and to refuse their assent to the belief that he had already come; that it was particularly wicked of them that they refused to believe in Mary in the same way as the Christians did. The Jews did not in his opinion reject Christianity because they could not, but because

they would not believe in it. They would not believe in it even if an angel came down from heaven to announce its truth. Their unbelief arose entirely out of the stubbornness of their hearts and their obstinacy. He therefore modestly presumed to advise the princes, because he was acquainted with the three causes of the pertinacity of the Jews and with the means to shake it. The first cause was that they were permitted to practise usury. This should not be tolerated, in spite of the many advantages accruing therefrom to a great number of Christians. He counsels the princes who had not yet expelled the Jews, to abstain from doing so. This apparent mildness, which Pfefferkorn did not repeat in any of his subsequent works, was however rendered nugatory by the advice he tendered on the second point. For, as the second cause why the Jews clung to their faith, he assigns the fact that they were not compelled to visit the churches to hear Christian sermons. He therefore counsels the princes not to tolerate any Jews in their territories unless the latter be forced to go to church, and hear Christianity preached to them. As the third impediment to their conversion he mentions their books. These must be taken away, they could not possibly be left to them. They were the storehouses of everything wicked and irreligious; they did the greatest harm to the Christian Church, against which they were directed in every point. Nothing should be left the Jews, (no festival prayer book, no daily prayer book), nothing except the text of the Bible.

Graetz here gives Pfefferkorn credit for a virtuous intention, which, in my opinion, he was far from possessing. Graetz thinks that Pfefferkorn, for the sake of gaining over the Jews to his opinions, was in this pamphlet rather kinder to the Jews, and that he therefore denied that the blood accusation, so often raised against the Jews, had any foundation. But we all know that the blood accusation is a monster with many heads. None of these heads has any brains, each of them is

provided with sharp venomous teeth. The most notorious form of that dangerous accusation is this, that the Jews made use of blood in their Passover rites. On this phase of the accusation Pfefferkorn does not touch in his pamphlet at all. But another form of the same accusation is, if possible, still sillier, still more repulsive, and not less dangerous. It was pretended that every Jew suffered by nature from a loathsome disease, the effects of which could only be cured by the use of human blood. It is of the accusation in this shape that Pfefferkorn acquits the Jews. The reason why he did so is obvious. In acquitting the Jews he acquits himself of ever having suffered in similar manner. He says, "I must defend the Jews in this instance, not however without a distinction. It is credible that there may have been and that there still are Jews who secretly kill Christian children. But not for the sake of having their blood, but only because of vengeance and hatred." Surely a defence couched in such terms was little calculated to gain over the Jews by kindness.

I have dwelt at some length on this first pamphlet of Pfefferkorn to give a specimen of the arguments, the malice, and the depravity of their author. But was Pfefferkorn the sole author of the book? Geiger says that the charge set forth by Pfefferkorn's enemies, that he was not the author of his works, and which they based on his ignorance of Latin, cannot be sustained, because the originals were always written in German, the Latin editions being mere translations. The fact is that the German and Latin editions of this book appeared almost simultaneously, so that it is difficult to say which of the two was the original. But granted even that the pamphlet was conceived and written in German by Pfefferkorn, it nevertheless remains a fact that the translation was made almost as soon as the work was written; a fact which goes far to prove that he acted from the first in collusion with others. Provided always that Pfefferkorn had since his conversion acquired sufficient knowledge of German to write in that language, for that

he should have been able to do so when still a butcher is out of the question. Pfefferkorn afterwards denied that he had ever been a butcher or a burglar. Now there is no harm in being a butcher, but in his case it would imply that he was a totally illiterate, a profoundly ignorant man. Why he did not fancy the idea of being called a burglar is obvious. L. Geiger takes Pfefferkorn's word for it against that of his accusers, even of Reuchlin, and especially because Pfefferkorn produced in one of his writings a certificate of good conduct. But that Pfefferkorn had been both a butcher and a burglar has since been established by irrefragable documentary evidence, first communicated by Graetz in his magazine in 1875. It is therefore impossible to assume that Pfefferkorn acted by himself even in his first attack on the Jews.

In the pamphlet that appeared in 1508 under the title of "Confessions of the Jews," he ridicules the Jewish rites during the penitential days and the Day of Atonement. The character of such calumnies is well known. Trifles, to which some people might object, are represented as being the gist and quintessence of the ceremonies; the real origin and meaning of the latter, which neither stand nor fall with such disputable points, are ignored, and thus the ceremonies themselves are ridiculed and condemned. In this case the whole pamphlet seems to me to be an enlarged edition of about two chapters taken from an anti-Jewish work by Victor von Carben, which had appeared a few years before, except that some new falsehoods and some fresh misrepresentations are added; for instance, that the Jews confess their sins to cocks and fishes, after which they eat their confessors. General incriminations and venomous denunciations in Pfefferkorn's usual style are not wanting. The book is dated "in the year 1508 on St. Valentine's day." No valentine ever was more scurrilous and vulgar. Two High German, two Low German, and two Latin editions of this book appeared in the same year.



His treatment of the Passover rites in his next pamphlet gives evidence of the progress of his malice. He considers the rites as symbols of Christianity,<sup>1</sup> and yet he asserts that the Jews, in performing them, were heretics against their own law. As a specimen of his mode of reasoning I quote the following argument. He says that the Jews instead of having a whole lamb, no bone of which should be broken, take only a piece in which there is a broken bone. For this they should be put to death according to their own law, for the man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath was stoned to death, because he had not observed the law. Therefore the Jews are worthy of death for their ceremonies on the Passover.

His next pamphlet (1509) he called "The Enemy of the Jews." A Latin translation appeared in the same year, and in this the Dominicans of Cologne for the first time publicly avowed their connection with Pfefferkorn. An anti-Jewish poem was printed on the title page, composed by Ortvinus Gratus, a man who virulently hated the Jews, and who had already gained his golden spurs as Jew-baiter. The book is a considerable advance on its predecessors in malice and misrepresentation. It contains a calculation of the sum to which a small coin amounts by usury in thirty years. The author repeats old accusations with fresh bitterness. He prints correctly in Hebrew a few lines of the prayer אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ, but translates them according to his convenience. They should have been translated thus: "Our Father, our King! annul the designs of those who hate us. Frustrate the counsel of our enemies. Cause to cease pestilence, sword, famine, captivity, destruction and plague from the children of thy covenant." Pfefferkorn's translation runs thus: "May God destroy the thoughts and counsels of our enemies by massacre, and sword, and famine, and pestilence, and various plagues, and may this happen for our sake."

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<sup>1</sup> A convert and missionary of a different stamp, Dr. Paulus Cassel, in a pamphlet entitled *Aletheia*, recently attempted the same kind of symbolisation.

He declares that all Jews were perjurers, and that no Jewish physicians, of whom a great number existed at that time, could be trusted, because they intentionally killed Christians. He maintains that the Jews must not be suffered to practise usury, nor must they be allowed to amass wealth in any other way. They must either be expelled, or the lowest work must be assigned to them, such as sweeping the streets, sweeping chimneys, removing filth, clearing out dog-kennels, and the like. The Talmud must be taken away and no book left them save the Bible.

Thus far Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans had fought against the Jews with the pen only. They scattered their pamphlets broadcast, and many editions appeared within a short period. I do not doubt that the Jews must both indirectly and directly have suffered from these machinations. But this was not enough. The firebrands of Cologne wanted some more signal effects, some riot, some expulsion, some wholesale confiscation. Their instigation of the princes of Germany had so far produced no results. They resolved to effect their purpose with the Emperor himself. The Emperor Maximilian was at that time encamped before Padua. Thither Pfefferkorn betook himself. On his way he halted at Munich to visit Maximilian's sister Cunigund, who was Abbess in a convent at that place. She was only too happy to be able to assist in such pious doings, and she gave Pfefferkorn letters to her brother, in which she implored the latter to comply with Pfefferkorn's desires. Thus he obtained from the Emperor a mandate, which authorised him to inspect, in presence of a priest and two magistrates, all books possessed by the Jews, and to suppress such as he found to contain anything against the Christian faith. Armed with this mandate he returned, but before putting it into execution he visited the celebrated German Humanist, Johann Reuchlin, at Stuttgart, whom he invited to ride with him to the Rhine, and to assist him in carrying out the mandate against the Jews. Various reasons are suggested why Pfefferkorn took this step; among others that

his object was to disarm in advance any objections against the enterprise by making it appear that it was made under the auspices of a man like Reuchlin. At the same time the party of Cologne wanted Reuchlin to commit himself, because they were displeased with him for having introduced amongst Christians the study of Hebrew. This is the opinion of Graetz.

Geiger thinks that Pfefferkorn wanted Reuchlin's assistance as a lawyer, for the latter had been for a long time the legal adviser of the Dominicans; or, possibly, that he wanted to give a scientific colour to the matter by the co-operation of the first authority in Hebrew. I do not think that the Dominicans, in asking for Reuchlin's assistance, had any sinister designs against him. They only thought of harming the Jews, and they were under the impression that Reuchlin was the proper person to assist them in their enterprise. In the first place, they did not think that anybody hated the Jews less than they did themselves. Of such sentiments of rectitude, justice, disinterested love of knowledge, as animated Reuchlin, they had no idea. They knew that six years before he had written a few pages in answer to the question, "Why the Jews are so long in misery," which question he answered by the trite arguments of their sin against the founder of Christianity, of their persistence in that sin, and the like. He mentioned in terms of condemnation three books of the Jews written against the Christians. He must therefore have been considered by the Dominicans as a zealous antagonist of the Jews and their doctrines, and this, in a different sense, he really was. But these people had no eyes for the sparks of humanity that lurk in Reuchlin's anti-Jewish pamphlet, for the germs of tolerance which are disseminated over these few pages. They considered Reuchlin as one of them. When we add to this that he was their regular legal adviser, and that his knowledge of Hebrew particularly qualified him to a business like the present, it is plain that it did not occur to them

for a moment to doubt that he would eagerly grasp at the opportunity of assisting in such a holy enterprise.

Let us try to picture to ourselves this meeting between Pfefferkorn and Reuchlin. There can be no question that Pfefferkorn must have been greatly elated by his preliminary successes. To be made much of by a set of men whom he probably considered as the first men of his age; to have been graciously received by the Emperor's sister, by the Emperor himself; to be called in an Imperial decree the Emperor's faithful Johann Pfefferkorn; to be appointed the sole agent in a momentous affair—he must have felt as if he had the world at his feet. How must Reuchlin have regarded him? When Pfefferkorn had introduced himself to Reuchlin, had told him all he had to tell, had spoken of his designs against the Jewish books, had revealed as much of himself as it was in his interest to reveal, I imagine Reuchlin to have muttered to himself: "There he is, Sergius in the flesh!"

About thirteen years previously Reuchlin had written a comedy in Latin under the title of "Sergius," in which the character of the person who now stood before him was sketched with remarkable accuracy. If we were not so well informed about the date at which this comedy was written, one could imagine that Pfefferkorn had sat for the portrait of Sergius. Reuchlin is said to have directed his satire against the man whom he held for the chief cause that he was obliged to flee from Würtemberg, the monk Holzinger. He chastises the latter as Sergius, a native of Arabia, a man of the greatest impudence and of the most corrupt morals. He had been a monk in a convent, but the crimes he had committed were so numerous that it was in vain that his brother monks tried to correct his evil ways. Impatient at their constant rebukes he left the convent, assumed the Mohammedan faith, and became the fiercest persecutor of the Christians. The picture of the apostate is painted by Reuchlin in the most vivid colours. Such a person it was who now stood before him.

Of course Reuchlin could not then have known in how far this Pfefferkorn answered to the Sergius of his fancy, but we may presume that he understood at first sight what manner of person he had to do with. The Dominicans of Cologne imagined that they would derive help from Reuchlin, but never did men fall into a greater miscalculation. Reuchlin excused himself from responding to Pfefferkorn's summons by pleading the stress of other affairs. He approved of the suppression of books which reviled Christianity, but was of opinion that the mandate had some formal defects. Pfefferkorn asked Reuchlin to point out to him wherein these defects consisted, and the latter tore a scrap off a piece of paper and noted them down. Pfefferkorn, however, nothing daunted, put into execution the confiscation of Jewish books in Frankfort on Friday, 28th September, 1509, and this initial step was followed by other confiscations at Mayence, Bingen, Lorch, Lahnstein, and Deutz.

We have seen that at Frankfort Pfefferkorn could not complete his search on the Friday mentioned. The clergymen who accompanied him interceded, and the examination was adjourned till Monday. The Jews of Frankfort sent a deputy to Worms on Friday to endeavour to stop the outrage by the interference of the High Court, the Kammergericht. On Saturday they despatched a messenger to the Elector and Archbishop of Mayence, Uriel of Memmingen, to whose jurisdiction Frankfort belonged. Uriel was a man of culture, had studied law, was of a mild nature, and was not unfriendly to the Jews. The Jews hoped to persuade the Archbishop to forbid his priests to participate in the affair. Their success was complete. On Monday Pfefferkorn and his companions again put in an appearance. The Jews had recovered from their surprise, and resolved on a line of action. They received Pfefferkorn with energetic protests, for they were anxious to gain time for the messenger to Uriel to return. They said they would appeal to the Emperor before the search should be

proceeded with, and they persuaded the priests and the councillors to let the matter stand over till Tuesday, in order that the council might decide whether they had a right to appeal to the Emperor or not. The council gave it as their opinion that they could appeal only after they had complied with the terms of the mandate. The confiscation was to be resumed in the afternoon, but before that time letters arrived from the Archbishop, in which he ordered the priests not to have anything more to do with the affair, and in which he expressed his dissatisfaction at their having committed themselves at all. This caused the councillors to withdraw also, for, according to the terms of the mandate, the presence of a priest was essential. Thus Pfefferkorn was baffled for the moment.

The Jews sent a deputy to the Emperor, and summoned other Jewish communities to appoint delegates to a meeting in Frankfort in the following month. The books that had been taken away were deposited with the council. The Archbishop, who may have resented the inauguration of the business in his diocese, without his consent being asked, wrote to the Emperor to the effect that it had never come to his knowledge that the Jews in his diocese possessed any books of the character described in the mandate. He said that Pfefferkorn was not clever enough for such an investigation; that he was not even sufficiently read in Holy Writ; that it was his (Uriel's) duty to inform the Emperor of this in case Pfefferkorn should apply for further powers. He suggested that the Emperor should appoint a person better acquainted with Jewish matters, in which case he would give his assistance. The Archbishop also wrote to his representative at the Imperial court to exert himself that no further authority might be conferred on Pfefferkorn, and to interest himself in favour of the Jews.

Pfefferkorn meanwhile again visited the Emperor to obtain a fresh mandate, purged this time from all formal defects. He again armed himself with a letter of recommendation from Cunigund. Thereupon commenced a series

of intrigues at the court of the Emperor between Pfefferkorn and the Jewish delegates. It is true the Jews had some recommendations from powerful protectors, but Pfefferkorn had, besides this, something that was better still. He was plentifully supplied with money. The Jews had no money; they were obliged to borrow some at the ruinous rate of two hundred per cent. The consequences were deplorable. They fought, however, bravely; they appealed to their privileges, which were inquired into and found to be legally of force. They presented a certificate from the Lord of Gutenstein, proving that Pfefferkorn had committed a burglary, and that he had narrowly escaped the gallows. But Pfefferkorn's representations prevailed. His audacity knew no bounds. He slandered the Jews; he bullied them in the presence of the Emperor, taking advantage of his brand new Christianity. The Jews could answer nothing; they fell on their knees before the Emperor, who afterwards sent his marshal to assure them that no harm would befall them.

Pfefferkorn obtained a second mandate, dated Roveredo, 10th November, 1509. The mandate complied apparently with the suggestions of the Archbishop Uriel. Scholars of the universities of Cologne, Mayence, Heidelberg, and Erfurt, were to meet at an appointed time to examine the books in the presence of Jewish Rabbis. The committee of inquiry was also to comprise "Jacob von Hochstraten of the Dominicans, doctor-of-law and grand inquisitor; the most learned Johannes Reuchlin, doctor-of-law, well grounded and versed in Hebrew writings, and Victor von Carben, formerly a Rabbi and now a priest." The whole affair was committed to the charge and supervision of Pfefferkorn (*zu Lob und Erc*, A 7a). Pfefferkorn was thus included as a member of the committee, but this could hardly be said to have been in formal opposition to Uriel's wishes, since so many other scholars, and even the Rabbis, were to be present. Uriel's suggestions were adopted in letter, but not in spirit, and

the machinations of the Dominicans of Cologne had produced the results for which they had intrigued ever since they had launched the *Joedenspiegel* two years before. In that pamphlet they had demanded (Spec. Exh. B 3a ed. 1508) that honest men should be consulted, men of sound doctrine, of perfect faith, and of spotless life; this demand was now responded to beyond expectation.

Fresh confiscations of books were now undertaken. The Jews of the larger congregations had not readily responded to the summons of those in Frankfort, but the new activity of Pfefferkorn stirred them into action. The council of Frankfort, who had hitherto remained in a position of passive indifference, and had, though not very zealously, obeyed the decrees of the Emperor, now joined the Jews in their protests. They called attention to the privileges of the Jews; they pointed out at the Reichstag at Worms that the literature of the Jews was useful for the spread of Christianity. These feelings in favour of the Jews were strengthened by the fact that Pfefferkorn sought to lay his hands also on the goods of foreign Jews, who had come to Frankfort to sell their books at the fair: this involved a breach of ancient privileges, and might embroil the city with a number of princes and lords who had given the Jews letters of safe conduct for their persons and their property. At any rate, the conference of scholars ordered by the Emperor never took place. On the contrary, the Emperor issued a third decree, directing the restoration to the Jews of all the confiscated books, on the condition that they would employ them in their synagogues, houses, and schools, but that they would not make any other use of them.

Pfefferkorn and his friends had not been idle in the meantime. A new pamphlet, commencing, "In honour and glory of the Emperor Maximilian," was written, and appeared at the beginning of the year 1510. A kind of historical survey is given of the whole business—of the mandates obtained, of the Emperor's zeal for



Christianity, of the recommendations of Cunigund. It contains also a list of the confiscated books, and of those the Jews were allowed to keep. The latter list is only an enumeration of the books of the Hebrew Bible. The Jews are threatened, the Emperor incited against them; exquisite cruelty and malice are stamped on every page. Pfefferkorn also published an appeal to the ecclesiastical and secular authorities, in which the wickedness of the Jewish books is again emphasized, and in which he declares that the Jews had attempted to bribe him to abstain from further proceedings; that he had resisted the temptation, but that some other Christians had not been so disinterested, but were corrupted by the Jews. Certainly the fanatics of Cologne were not easily silenced. Hardly two months after the third mandate a fourth appeared, which enjoined on the Archbishop of Mayence to collect the opinions of the Universities of Cologne, Mayence, Erfurt and Heidelberg, as also the opinions of Hochstraten, Reuchlin, Victor von Carben, and other men who were acquainted with Hebrew literature and were not Jews, as to the advisability of destroying the Jewish books. Pfefferkorn was nominated by the Emperor as the agent (*sollicitator*) in this matter, whose duty it was to send the various opinions to the Emperor.

Pfefferkorn figures here only as a kind of messenger, not as a scholar, who himself was asked for his opinion. The protestations of his antagonists as to his ignorance appear at last to have prevailed. For the rest, the scheme of the people of Cologne seemed again to prove successful. The same persons and universities were again consulted, and the collection of separate opinions must have appeared a task much easier to execute than that of assembling delegates at a certain time and a certain place. The design of bringing about such a meeting had already been shipwrecked, and this new plan was started. But the hopes they had entertained of Reuchlin were deplorably frustrated. Whatever his frame of mind when he published

his anti-Jewish letter, he harped now on quite a different string. He wrote his opinion, in which he actually defended the Jewish books, except such as contained direct blasphemies against Christianity. Of the latter class, however, he said that he knew only of two books, which the Jews themselves held to be apocryphal. The opinion contains also some sharp hits against Pfefferkorn. The experienced lawyer who was competent to judge about the legal aspect of the affair—the only man among all those whose opinions had been solicited who possessed real knowledge of Hebrew and Jewish lore, who as a Humanist enjoyed European fame—that man had forsaken the side of the Dominicans. Their fury can be imagined. A new book by Pfefferkorn appeared, the *Handspiegel*—"Hand-glass"—as bitter this time against Reuchlin as against the Jews. Reuchlin is called in it an enemy of Christianity, an apostate, a heretic, who was bribed by the Jews, who contradicted his own opinions. His knowledge of Hebrew was a fiction, his Hebrew Grammar and Dictionary were written by others—the impostor had only printed it. He favoured and defended the Jews; he loved them instead of hating them. He could read Hebrew when the pronunciation was given in Latin or German characters. He was as quick at reading Hebrew as an ass that is hurriedly driven up a staircase. These were the accusations made, this the tone assumed against Reuchlin. But how did Pfefferkorn become acquainted with the contents of Reuchlin's opinion? The latter, who had sent it under seal to the Archbishop of Mayence, maintained that Pfefferkorn had no right whatever to read it. He certainly had no right to make it the subject of an attack upon Reuchlin—to turn to private use a document destined for the Emperor's eye, before the Emperor's pleasure about it was known, even before the Emperor had seen it. Pfefferkorn and his wife openly hawked this pamphlet in a booth at the fair of Frankfort.

Reuchlin travelled to the Emperor, and when he saw him at Reutlingen, on the 29th of April, 1511, he showed him

Pfefferkorn's libel. The Emperor was displeased with it, and promised to refer the case for decision to the Bishop of Augsburg. But this was never done, and Reuchlin, knowing full well that nothing could be gained by waiting any longer, wrote his *Augenspiegel*—"Spectacles, Eyeglass." In this he relates the whole story, gives a copy of the opinion sent by him to the Archbishop, repudiates the charge of unduly favouring the Jews; palliates, often sophistically enough, some of the statements made by him, and reproaches Pfefferkorn with having written in his *Handglass* not less than thirty-four falsehoods.

The publication of the *Augenspiegel* was a turning point in the life of Pfefferkorn. Thus far the whole of the intrigues, malignings, incitations to violence, the production of venomous incriminations, and of falsehoods were all on his side—at least, went under his name. But from the time of the *Augenspiegel* all that was changed; he had no longer the game all to himself. Reuchlin's friends and admirers took the defence of the latter into their own hands, and they pilloried Pfefferkorn as a liar, as an impostor, who had traded with a knowledge of which he was totally destitute. They declared that he was the willing tool of the Dominicans in a conspiracy against the Jews and their money. Now, the question arises, Is this charge against Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans, that they wanted to gain money by a judiciously managed persecution of the Jews, founded on fact? Can we trust to the mere assertion of the Reuchlinists? Were the latter the kind of men who would do justice to an opponent—who, whilst blaming bad actions, would acknowledge possible good intentions? I must say that, perhaps with one exception, that of Reuchlin himself, none of the adversaries of the Dominicans can be credited with this chivalry of literary warfare. With the exception of Reuchlin, they reached in respect to insinuations and misrepresentations—aye, in respect to deliberate falsehoods—the lowest level of even a Pfefferkorn himself.

It is on this point that I must call attention to the different methods of Ludwig Geiger and of Graetz, neither of whom has, in my opinion, been able to keep the balance even. Geiger deviates too much to the side of the Dominicans; Graetz inclines too much to the side of the Reuchlinists. When we say that the Reuchlinists—always excepting Reuchlin himself—could not be trusted in their estimate of the motives of their opponents, that their insinuations and charges required corroboration, this does not mean that their accusations could not possibly be true. They were capable of making false accusations; are, therefore, all their accusations necessarily false? This were an illogical inference, yet I cannot help thinking that Geiger occasionally drew his inferences in some such fashion. He says that Pfefferkorn had no motives except the ardour of a renegade, and perhaps a good dose of natural malignity. But what about the accusations flung at him by his enemies? Geiger declares them to be false. What he should have asserted is that they wanted corroboration. Geiger often accepts the statements of Pfefferkorn and his friends in the face of conflicting evidence. I do not think this to be just. If the Reuchlinists fancied an occasional falsehood when it suited their purposes, the party of Cologne were certainly not less addicted to the same pastime. But is it then true that the accusations of the Reuchlinists are altogether without corroboration? Does, then, the testimony of Reuchlin himself count for nothing? It is true, he considered himself to be the attacked party; he was subsequently driven to exasperation by his enemies, and was often most vehement in his invective. But he is acknowledged by all as a man in whom the love of truth was interwoven with his very existence, for whom it would have been an utter impossibility wilfully to misrepresent even an opponent.

Now, when a quarrel is driven to the point of embitterment which the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn strife reached, even such a pure love of truth may sometimes be involun-

tarily tainted in points of minor importance. Nevertheless a man like Reuchlin, unless fully convinced of the fact, would not have persisted as he does in his books and in his letters in accusing the Cologne party of having nothing in view but Jewish money, in asserting that Pfefferkorn was as ignorant of Hebrew as a Jew could possibly be; that he was an illiterate butcher, who, having been obliged by his misdeeds to avoid the Jews, turned against the latter; that he was a willing instrument in the hands of the Dominicans of Cologne in their plot against the books and purses of the Jews. Such assertions, repeatedly brought forward by a man like Reuchlin, go very far to serve as a corroboration of the otherwise untrustworthy sallies of his adherents. At most we could say that they in their turn require further confirmation, but they are certainly not to be set aside in the way Geiger does.

And do they really lack this confirmation? Is not common-sense in their favour? Would Pfefferkorn have been able, without assistance from others, to gain the knowledge of the existence of Cunigund; would he himself have been able to understand her importance for the matter on hand; would he on his own motion have gone to her to solicit a letter of introduction to her brother; and would he have ventured on his own responsibility to molest the Emperor, who had at that time quite other affairs to attend to? Whence was he to obtain the money for his travels and for securing the necessary backstairs influence at Court—he who, when his first confiscation had been cut short by the interference of the Archbishop, prayed the council of Frankfort for a contribution, and was fain to pocket the prodigious remuneration of two florins?

Geiger says that Pfefferkorn was not mercenary; let us see how he proves it. He says that Pfefferkorn did not embrace Christianity from mercenary motives, for—he did not from the same motives revert to Judaism. The question is, was any money ever offered him by the

Jews to bring him back to his former religion? No mention is made of such a thing. Pfefferkorn only says that the Jews offered him money for discontinuing the confiscations. Perhaps this is true, and perhaps not; we have only Pfefferkorn's word for it. If true he refused, either because he was not mercenary or because he was too deeply implicated. But even if Geiger's assumption were founded on fact, it would first have to be proved, entwined as his career was with the doings of the Dominicans, and after the prominence he had gained for himself as a zealot for the propagation of Christianity, that he would have been able to become a Jew again without danger to his person. And how does Geiger know that the berth he had obtained at Cologne as master of the hospital and measurer of salt (*Spitalmeister und Salzmesser*) and a certain position of respectability was not enough to counterbalance any Jewish offer, which, according to Geiger's notion, was made to him? Geiger strenuously denies that Pfefferkorn had even been a butcher or a burglar, considering, as has been previously remarked, the latter's assertions to the contrary and some certificates of good conduct produced by him stronger than the unanimous evidence of all his opponents, Reuchlin included. That Pfefferkorn's assertions on this point are false has been established beyond doubt by additional evidence which was discovered in Rosenthal's library in Amsterdam, and communicated by Graetz in his magazine in 1875, after Geiger's work had appeared.<sup>1</sup> Geiger asks what motive can the Dominicans have had in concealing themselves at first behind Pfefferkorn? The answer is clear. They knew that the shafts launched at the Jews would pierce all the better if discharged by one of their own kin. It was their policy to show that the storm which broke over the Jews had been brewing in their own midst.

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<sup>1</sup> Comp. Dr. Joseph Perles' *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hebräischen und Aramäischen Studien*, p. 29.

Geiger says of the *Handspiegel*, the first book directly turned against Reuchlin, that nobody but Pfefferkorn was responsible for it, that it was not a manifesto of the Dominicans of Cologne, for Pfefferkorn asserts most solemnly (in 1516, thus five years later), that the *Handglass* was neither written nor printed in Cologne but in Mayence. But who had furnished him with allegations from books which it was impossible for him to read? Pfefferkorn answers readily, that they were furnished to him by the three members of the Commission appointed by the Emperor to report upon the opinions. Nobody except Pfefferkorn ever mentions such a Commission; that, as Pfefferkorn says, Hieronymus Baldung should have belonged to it was already doubted by Graetz, because he proved afterwards to be a great friend of Reuchlin; the report of the Commission as adduced by Pfefferkorn being altogether opposed to Reuchlin. But I have reasons to believe that, if not the whole report, certainly Baldung's signature, can be proved to be a forgery. The signature, given by Pfefferkorn, runs thus:—"Hieronymus de leonibus dictus Baldung sacre theologie professor, artium et medicinarum doctor, etc.:" Baldung, professor of theology, doctor of arts and medicine. Where, besides this signature, which Geiger follows (p. 238), was Baldung ever called a theologian? It is well known that he was a lawyer, and had been professor at Freiburg, not of theology, but of law (Böcking, *Hutten*, Supplem. II., p. 301 (303)). Is it not suspicious that Baldung, when signing his name on a report for the Emperor, should have forgotten that he was a lawyer, and made himself a theologian instead? And why, in signing so important a document, should he have subscribed himself *Hieronimus* instead of *Pius Hieronymus*, which was his real name? It appears that the manufacturers of the document in question thought "Pius" to be, not one of his names, but a title given him for his piety. This was enough to stamp him in their eyes as a theologian, for what layman would have been honoured by the title Pius? Accordingly they

omitted it in signing his name for him. No wonder, therefore, that, in one of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, ii. 18, the Doctor of Theology, Simon Saussage, reports that somebody asked who were these three commissioners? And the answer was, I do not know, but I think they were the three men who appeared to Abraham as mentioned in Genesis.

Another point of consideration is the amount of Pfefferkorn's Hebrew, Rabbinical and general knowledge. Here, again, Geiger breaks a lance on behalf of his client. He says Pfefferkorn was no scholar, but when Erasmus called him a pure idiot (*prorsus idiota*), this expression might be too strong; nor was he in Hebrew as ignorant as Graetz tried to make him out. He knew as much as an ordinary Jew of that time. Pfefferkorn said that he translated the Gospels into Hebrew, and there was no reason to doubt the statement.

Now it is my opinion that Pfefferkorn stood in every branch of knowledge on the lowest step, and that in respect to Hebrew the term *prorsus idiota* is, if possible, hardly strong enough. Reuchlin, when exposing the thirty-four falsehoods with which he charges Pfefferkorn, says, concerning the sixth falsehood that the baptised Jew had learned in his youth the Pentateuch, according to the custom of the Jews, and, perhaps, some lessons out of the Bible, called Haphthoras, which they must read every week throughout the year. In this, says Reuchlin, he was perhaps skilled and ready from habit like a nun in the psalter, for he had received for this severe thrashings at school (dann man hatt in dick in der schule darumb geschlagen). For the rest he did not know anything thoroughly. And regarding the twenty-fifth falsehood Reuchlin says: "When he was in my library I put before him a Talmudical work called *Mordechai*. He thereupon confessed that he had only learned the Bible, and did not understand any such books." Geiger speaks of exaggeration on the part of Reuchlin; but the statement of the latter of what happened in his



library is the barest statement of fact, and cannot be doubted; and where are the signs of exaggeration in that other statement that Pfefferkorn was beaten at school? Jacob von Hochstraten wrote a book against Petrus Ravennas because the latter disapproved of the custom of hanging a young lad for a petty theft, but we do not find that anybody objected in the fifteenth century to a school-boy being thrashed. At any rate, Pfefferkorn knew no Hebrew; if he had ever known any he had forgotten it. His own writings prove it. Graetz gives some examples of his ignorance, but these refer to Talmudical knowledge only. But he was even ignorant of the Hebrew names of the books of the Bible. I have already mentioned a list given by him of the books he had allowed the Jews to keep. In that list the names of the books are given in Hebrew; over every Hebrew word the name of the book is placed in Latin, underneath every Hebrew word the pronunciation of such word is given. I make the printer responsible for false spelling, but what must we think of an enumeration like this: חאבוקק צפניה חגי זכריה מלכי כתובים: משלי איום, the pronunciation underneath is also given as Malachias, Xovim, Mischle, Iyoeff, but the Latin names on the top are Malachias, Psalterium, Parabole, Job, etc. It is evident that he did not know that the Hebrew name for the Psalms was תהלים, that he took the word כרובים written on the flyleaf, a name denoting all the Hagiographa from the Psalms to the Chronicles inclusive, to mean only the Psalms.

In his *Enemy of the Jews* he quotes verses 11—15 of the first chapter of Isaiah, with the pronunciation in black letters on the top and the translation under each word. In verse 12, מי בקש זאת מידכם רמס, the word רמס (remos) is printed דמס (demom). Considered as a misprint this would be pardonable enough 'ר and 'ד, 'ס and 'ם being easily confounded. But in the pronunciation on the top of the word we find in black letter also the word DEMOM. This first chapter of Isaiah is particularly well

known to Jews, because it is read as Haphtora on the Sabbath before the fast of Ab, and it is chanted in the same way as the Lamentations of Jeremiah on that fast. It is, therefore, prominent among the Haphtoras, and if Pfefferkorn had had the slightest recollection of what he had learned when a youth, and he had found in the copy he consulted the word דרם, he would have been able to correct such a glaring blunder, which is found both in the German and Latin edition. It appears, therefore, that Pfefferkorn, after his conversion, did not look into any Hebrew book, that he forgot even the scanty amount of Hebrew that was thrashed into him at school, and of which he was once perhaps possessed.

As has already been indicated above, the appearance of Reuchlin's *Augenspiegel* marked the turning point in the career of Pfefferkorn. Before that book was written, Pfefferkorn's attack had been unprovoked. He had undertaken to destroy the books of the Jews, to do the latter all possible harm, he had made private use of a document destined for the eye of the Emperor, and was the ostensible libeller. The publication of the *Augenspiegel* changed the whole complexion of affairs. Henceforth Pfefferkorn is not so much engaged in making as in repelling attacks. He writes with increasing bitterness not only against the Jews but also against Reuchlin and his friends. He would probably have done so if his opponents had contented themselves with calling him by his right name, with showing him and the world who and what he really was. In that case he would have been at pains to show that he had neither been a butcher nor a burglar, that his intentions were pure, that he was not an Abecedarian in Hebrew and worse than an Abecedarian in everything else. But when we see him, Pfefferkorn, illtreated as meanly as he treated others, when we see his enemies adopt tactics against him such as one would not use even against one's Pfefferkorn, then it is idle to be surprised that in his subsequent writings he tried to outdo his own previous efforts and the attacks

of his adversaries. It is idle to expect a Pfefferkorn to turn a saint when treated after his own fashion. This it is that Graetz seems to have expected. Graetz has no word of disapproval for the enormities of the false accusations, for the ruthless, cowardly, murderous blows flung at the head of Pfefferkorn; but all his indignation is reserved for Pfefferkorn, who wards off these blows with similar thrusts.

Pfefferkorn's latest pamphlets, the *Burning Glass*, the *Alarm Bell*, the *Defences*, the *Mitleydige Clarg* are more venomous than the previous emanations from his pen, but this virulence is explicable, however much it is to be condemned. His enemies had preferred a charge against him which was untrue, which, consequently, served his turn. The charge was so atrocious, the concoction so easily refuted, Pfefferkorn so readily cleared on this count, that, with some people, it must have procured him credit even for his falsehoods. The attack fell chiefly to the charge of the famous Ulrich von Hutten. Towards the end of September, 1514, a man called Pfaff Rapp was condemned to death, some said his name was also Pfefferkorn. There is a probability that Ulrich von Hutten was one of the judges at the trial. It is not certain that this delinquent was born a Jew at all. It is not certain what his crime was or whether he had committed one; but he was justly condemned according to the notions of that time; for torture had extracted from him a confession of a number of possible and impossible offences. Among other crimes, he confessed to having tortured and stabbed part of a Host till the blood flowed out of it, to having received a hundred florins from Jews to poison the Duke of Magdeburg, his brother and their court, to having promised the Jews to poison all the country people in the Dioceses of Magdeburg and Halberstadt. For this lengthy catalogue of offences, the man's flesh was torn from him with red-hot pincers, after which he was roasted to death.

The Reuchlinists invented the story that this man was

Johann Pfefferkorn, who had attacked Reuchlin. A poem was composed, most probably by Hutten, in which the poet says that Germany could never have produced such a monster. It were better not to baptize any Jews, for this man had committed crimes which surpass those of the monsters of mythology, which are enumerated at length. The alleged crimes are mentioned, and emphasis is given to the monstrosity of torturing a Host and of causing the blood to flow from it, and the praises of Albert of Magdeburg are sung, whose good fortune it was so signally to punish him. Now, it is quite clear that the authors of this mystification knew better or could have known better if they had chosen. That Hutten's indignation was got up for the occasion is justly pointed out by Strauss. Hutten was the last man to believe in the bleeding of the Host; he would have laughed to scorn such a notion if it had been adduced by an opponent. The falsehood was so tenaciously adhered to, that, as Pfefferkorn says, when he proved to be alive, his enemies said that the other Pfefferkorn was his brother, and when he showed that he had no brother, they said it was his cousin. We see from this that the adherents of Reuchlin were not very particular in choosing the weapons with which they fought, they were not troubled by high-toned scruples of chivalrous warfare. Their arms did not improve in morality in the course of time, but they gained considerably in wit, keenness, and effectiveness.

They unmasked their batteries and bombarded the positions of their enemies with one discharge after another of satirical letters, which hit with such deadly effect that their adversaries were unable to lift their heads. It is true, the latter tried to retaliate, but, although equalling their opponents in malignity and surpassing them in mendacity and unscrupulousness, yet they were destitute of the caustic wit and the ideal perfection of satirical spirit of a Crotus Rubianus and an Ulrich von

Hutten, as exemplified in the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, the "Letters of the Unknown Men."

Reuchlin, in order to show that he had the greatest intellects of the age on his side, had published a series of letters written by the celebrities of the time to himself, under the title of *Epistolæ Clarorum Virorum*, "Letters of Famous Men." Crotus Rubianus, who was most probably the author of the first series of the satirical letters, chose therefore for the title of his satire "Letters of Obscure or Unknown Men." To translate *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* by "Letters of Obscurantists," "Briefe von Dunkelmännern," is translating according to the *Drash*, not according to the *Pshat*. As the *Epistolæ Clarorum Virorum* were written to Reuchlin, the satirical letters were pretended to be written to Ortvinus Gratius, one of the most conspicuous members of the Cologne party. Whether all or any of the charges, preferred against the latter are true or not, whether he is really the sainted man, whom his enthusiastic apologist, D. Reichling, tried to depict, I shall not attempt to decide. Why he should have been selected as the target against which the shafts of the satirists were particularly directed; whether it was really because one of the chief co-operators in the manufacture of that famous satire, Hermann von dem Busche, had a personal spite against him, it is enough to know that he was an inveterate enemy of the Jews, as he had shown on more than one occasion; that he was one of the principal protectors of Pfefferkorn, some of whose works he had translated into Latin, if not entirely composed. About the moral character of these satirical productions I can only admit the justice of the description given of them by Sir William Hamilton in an article of the *Edinburgh Review* of March, 1831 (vol. liii.), part of which was reprinted in a life of Reuchlin written by Barham. Sir W. Hamilton says: "Morally considered this satire is an atrocious libel, which can only be palliated on the plea of retaliation, necessity, the im-

portance of the end, and the consuetude of the times. Its victims are treated like vermin, hunted without law and exterminated without mercy."

That the accusations made in these letters cannot be all true I readily admit, but not that they must be necessarily false because they are contained in these lampoons. Many of them are otherwise fully confirmed. The tone of these letters is in the highest degree indecent, the expressions most irreverent whether considered from a catholic or from a humanistic, certainly from a Jewish point of view. Bible texts and even the name of God are freely used for the sake of illustrating some filthy and obscene sally. The language in which they are couched is a caricature of the dog-Latin in vogue with the monks of those days, and its drollery cannot be described. To what point of perfection satirical art is raised in these letters is manifest from the fact, that even great and unprejudiced men have admiration only for the art with which the attacks are executed, and have no eyes for the wickedness which this art embellishes.

The impression they produced in Germany was electric. Even the scruples of the more sober friends of Reuchlin had to struggle with the inclination to smile produced by that which was ludicrous in them, and laughter soon drove every other emotion before it. I said before that many, if not most of the accusations contained in the letters are only too true, and the frivolity prevalent in them may have had some good results. Looking only upon the results, what does it matter then that the authors were themselves as deeply steeped in the vices which they laid to the charge of their enemies? When we consider the results only, what does it matter, if the persons named in the letters were partly or altogether free from the vices imputed to them, since the attacks were directed against a class of persons, namely the monks, rather than against this or that individual? That the monks were portrayed in life-like resemblance is evident

from the fact that the monks in Belgium and England did not at first notice the satire at all, and really thought that one of their midst had written these letters as a satire against Reuchlin and in favour of the Dominicans. This fact is not without importance in respect to the trustworthiness of the accusations made in the letters. A doctor of theology at Louvain went even so far as to buy twenty copies for distribution among his friends. These facts are related by Erasmus, of whom it is said, that he laughed so much at one of these letters, that an abscess in his throat opened and he was cured. These facts are however very inconvenient to those who would fain declare all accusations in the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* to be malicious inventions; and the afore-mentioned apologist of Ortvinus Gratius says (page 8) that he does not hesitate to consider the whole narrative as a bad joke. This is easy, but the statement of Erasmus is confirmed by Sir Thomas More, who wrote in 1516, that is before Erasmus, that the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* pleased everybody in a most remarkable manner. They pleased the scholars as a jest; they pleased the ignorant people also; for when the latter laughed, they intended only to laugh at the style, which they did not want to defend, but which in their opinion was compensated for by the gravity of the contents. I take this quotation from the article in the *Edinburgh Review*, in which it is also stated that these letters have always been a stumbling block to English critics and historians. Of the examples adduced there I shall only cite that of the Essayist Richard Steele, who says in the *Tatler* (1710), "It seems this is a collection of letters, which some profound blockheads, who lived before our time, have written in honour of each other and for their mutual information in each others' absurdities." What does it matter in the result if Ortvinus Gratius was really the saint, and Arnold von Tungeren the still purer saint, as the apologist, D. Reichling, describes them? For let us not forget that one of the

proofs of Reichling for the purity of the morals of A. von Tungeren consists in this, that the latter was the author of a book against what?—against those very vices of the monks for which the latter were so unmercifully pilloried in the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* (p. 61, n. 4). Can we say after this that the reproaches in these letters are devoid of all corroboration? It would be interesting, perhaps, to give some specimens from the letters themselves, but as I should be obliged to confine myself to extracts bearing on Pfefferkorn, and as the reflections on him are almost invariably made in a very coarse tone, I think it is rather my duty to be silent. A most interesting survey of the letters can be found in the *Life of Ulrich von Hutten*, by Strauss, translated into English by Mrs. Sturge.

But enough has been said to show that we cannot expect Pfefferkorn to be gentle in his expressions after attacks of this kind. It is difficult to understand Graetz's indignation against Pfefferkorn for the last pamphlet the latter is known to have written. If ever Pfefferkorn's virulence was excusable, it was in this case. It is true that Pfefferkorn, as Geiger says, attacks Reuchlin ("Eine mitleydliche Claeg uber alle Claeg an unsern allergnaedlichsten Kayser, etc.") in terms which would be too strong for the worst criminal, and when we wish to have an idea of the height to which his anger against the Jews ascends, we must add together all expressions of violence ever before uttered by him (p. 435). This cannot be defended, but it is not unnatural. The book has a picture of Reuchlin, quartered and hanged. Reuchlin, who despises God, should be cut up into four pieces and hung on the high roads. Pfefferkorn calls Reuchlin the chief coiner of wickedness, a master of lies, a blasphemer of the Church, a falsifier of Holy Writ, a deceiver and seducer of the Christian people, a patron of the perfidious Jews, Dr. Woodenspoon, Dr. Piggyspoon, and a whole catalogue more. But these expressions are no more than a strongly



reflected echo of the vituperations hurled at his own head. He wants Reuchlin to be quartered and hung. No doubt, very unfriendly of him; but what did the Reuchlinists want to be done to him? In their indignation and resentment against the party at Cologne, some of them, namely, Hermann v. d. Busche, and U. von Hutten, composed a poem, "*Triumphus Capnionis*," in honour of Reuchlin, in which the latter is described as triumphing over his enemies. The pageant is described, in which the triumphant Reuchlin is led about in the imagination of the poets, and his enemies are dragged along in chains. To Pfefferkorn the following words are devoted (v. 704-735): "Call two hangmen, bring all your tools, the cross, the noose, and the hook with the ropes. Now, ye hangmen, do this. Put him in such a position that his face is turned towards the earth, his knees upwards, that he may not look to heaven, nor contaminate us with his eyes. Make him bite the soil with his slanderous lips and eat some of the dust. Do not delay, tear his tongue, that first origin of evil, out of his mouth, or else he will say something wicked at the procession. Tear off his nose and both his ears, put the hook into his feet, and drag him thus, face and chest downward to sweep the earth. Scatter about his teeth, so that nothing remain in the mouth to hurt, and although his hands are tied on his back, yet cut off the tips of his fingers," and so on. Graetz gives a translation of this part of the poem without a single word of disapprobation; and then he is surprised and indignant at the terms which Pfefferkorn afterwards applies to Reuchlin and the Jews! I have not quoted the whole passage, how this torture excites commiseration in nobody, and only rouses the derision of boy and man, of married and unmarried women. All laugh at and applaud the sight. Again, a description follows of Pfefferkorn's position in all its sickening details. The poet cannot leave the mutilated body alone; a few verses after he again cards him, and scourges him, and cudgels him, and makes him slowly

breathe his last under these tortures. The honest and truly impartial Böcking, in spite of the veneration he feels for his hero, von Hutten, observes that the author relapses here into the same foaming acerbity which sullies his declamation against the Pseudo-Pfefferkorn. Böcking is surprised that such details can please anybody who is not a professional executioner; that the author did not understand that such exquisite cruelty can have only one effect, namely, that of rousing in humane readers some feelings in favour of Pfefferkorn. I, myself, am obliged to agree for once with D. Reichling, that the original of the enormities found in Pfefferkorn's last pamphlet is contained in that poem, and that the imitation leaves its model far behind.

No, it is not his last pamphlet which condemns Pfefferkorn, but the books published at the beginning of his career, those that were issued before 1511, and the activity he displayed during the same period. It is certainly doubtful how many of these infamous distortions of the truth, how many of these downright falsehoods must be attributed to him. But whoever hides under the name of Pfefferkorn, the books are witnesses of the lowest impulses of human nature, made more repulsive by the fact that they profess to be inspired by motives of religion. Nor would Pfefferkorn's memory be rescued from well-merited obloquy, even if his malignant efforts were inspired by a sense of duty, by an intense and fanatical self-deception.

S. A. HIRSCH.

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